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CIA/ONE/STAFF MEM/87-63
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

23 December 1963

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 87-63:

25X1

SUBJECT: Cyprus: Impending Communal Crisis

SUMMARY

The determination of President Makarios to abolish the special constitutional privileges of the Turkish minority has brought the Greek and Turkish communities on Cyprus to the verge of violence. If the Greek Cypriots find Turkish counter proposals unacceptable, Makarios seems likely to take such unilateral actions as amending the Constitution or denouncing the Treaty of Guarantee. These acts would create the danger of widespread conflict between the heavily armed paramilitary forces the two communities have organized throughout the island and could even lead to direct Greek and Turkish military involvement. Even if general violence does not occur, attempts by Makarios unilaterally to change the Constitution would heat up the political situation. Without some

25X1

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

effective international intervention, which is unlikely until Greece and Turkey themselves are at the verge of confrontation, this mounting bitterness will make an ultimate solution more difficult. Should violence occur, return to peaceful coexistence within a single state might become impossible, leaving scars that would trouble Greek-Turkish relations for a long time to come.

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1. In Cyprus brinkmanship has brought the Greek and Turkish communities to the verge of violence. President Makarios the Greek Cypriot leader, has taken the initiative in provoking a direct communal confrontation by his determination to abolish the special constitutional privileges of the Turkish minority. In 1959 he accepted the London-Zurich Accords, which established virtually autonomous Greek and Turkish communities, in order to secure British withdrawal from Cyprus. But the Accords represented for him, as for the Greek community at large, only a way station toward attaining unrestricted Greek freedom of action. Even though the taste of power has made union with Greece -- the Turks' greatest bugbear -- no longer seem palatable to Makarios, he has exerted little effort to overcome Turkish suspicion of his intentions.

- 2 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

2. Since the fall of 1962, he has been actively working to prepare both domestic and foreign opinion for radical revision of the constitutional guarantees of the Turkish community. Indeed, once openly committed to rapid achievement of this desire, Makarios has appeared to believe that his leadership would be significantly damaged should he turn from this course. It is likely that in this frame of mind Makarios has construed as support British suggestions that any demands to the Turkish community be posed as interpretations rather than amendments of the Constitution. Moreover, with the accession of Greek Foreign Minister Sophocles Venizelos in November 1963, the restraint previously urged from Athens has given way to outright encouragement for Makarios' aims.

3. The issue has been joined since 30 November 1963, when Makarios presented a memorandum to Turkish Vice President Kuchuk calling for a sweeping reduction in the rights of the Turkish minority, but few concessions from the Greek community.* The uncompromising tone of these demands, which were soon leaked by

* The main provisions of this memorandum were that the constitution be amended to end (1) the veto right of the Turkish deputies on matters of foreign policy, defense, and security; (2) the right of Turkish deputies to sit as a separate body to consider laws relating to taxation, the municipalities, or the electoral system; (3) separate municipalities; (4) the separate Turkish judicial system; (5) the Turkish community's right to have specified proportions of the security forces and civil service; and (6) the veto power of the Turkish members on the Public Service Commission. These rights had been guaranteed in the London-Zurich Accords.

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

the Greek Foreign Minister to the Athens press, posed a direct challenge to the Turks. Although Kuchuk, on advice from Ankara, did not reject these proposals out of hand, his initial reaction was strongly negative. For its part, the Turkish government, in the midst of a serious governmental crisis, categorically rejected the proposals, which Makarios insisted he was presenting for their information, not for their approval.

Rising Communal Tensions

4. For the present, Turkish strategy seems to be to use delaying tactics. Kuchuk indicated that he would need some time for a response, and the Turkish Ambassador to Cyprus estimated that Kuchuk's reply would take a month. The Turkish communal leaders probably want to undercut possible accusations that they were unwilling to negotiate, but, given the temper of both Ankara and the Turkish community, Kuchuk can hardly be sufficiently forthcoming to provide the basis for fruitful negotiations. Kuchuk is almost certain to reject the need for the changes proposed by Makarios and may counter with some extreme proposals of his own, such as territorial partition -- itself of tortured concept in view of the indiscriminate intermingling of Greek and Turkish inhabitants on the island. These counter proposals will almost certainly be unacceptable to the Greek Cypriots.

- 4 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

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5. In the absence of strong pressure from Athens and Ankara, which appears improbable at the present stage, neither the Greek nor the Turkish community is likely to back down or consider realistic compromises. Their resolve has been strengthened by the presence on the island of garrisons of 950 Greek and 650 Turkish soldiers in accordance with the Treaty of Alliance.* Such has been the temper of the protagonists that both sides have long been developing heavily armed and well organized paramilitary organizations throughout the island against possible resumption of intercommunal struggle. Indeed, despite his disclaimer of blame if violence should ensue, Makarios has evinced willingness to commit all forces at his disposal to achieve success. At the same time, the Turkish Cypriots are preparing to resist by force if necessary, backed up by the Turkish military contingent which, like the Greek contingent, is already engaging in preparations and training for this eventuality. Both communities are aware and of the other's activity/are spurred to greater efforts by this knowledge.

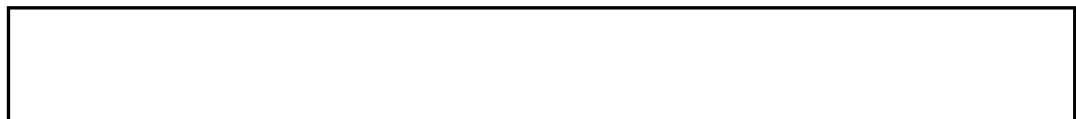
* The Treaty of Alliance between Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus was an integral part of the London-Zurich Accords and provides for the joint defense of Cyprus against direct or indirect aggression. Under its provisions, contingents of Greek and Turkish soldiers are responsible for training the Cyprus Army.

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S-E-C-R-E-T

6. Although this charged atmosphere has been further electrified by incidents, such as the bombing of a statue to an EOKA hero and a counter-demonstration, neither side apparently wants to initiate any organized armed action, at least until the Turkish decision whether or not to negotiate is announced. Yet the ability of the responsible leaders in Cyprus to control their followers is becoming increasingly questionable. Further incidents could easily occur as tempers flare during the present period of uneasy expectancy and these incidents could precipitate widespread communal conflict. In this event, the police and security forces are likely to split along communal lines. This would contribute to general chaos that neither the Greek and Turkish governments nor the communal leaders probably desire. 1/

Attitudes of Other Powers



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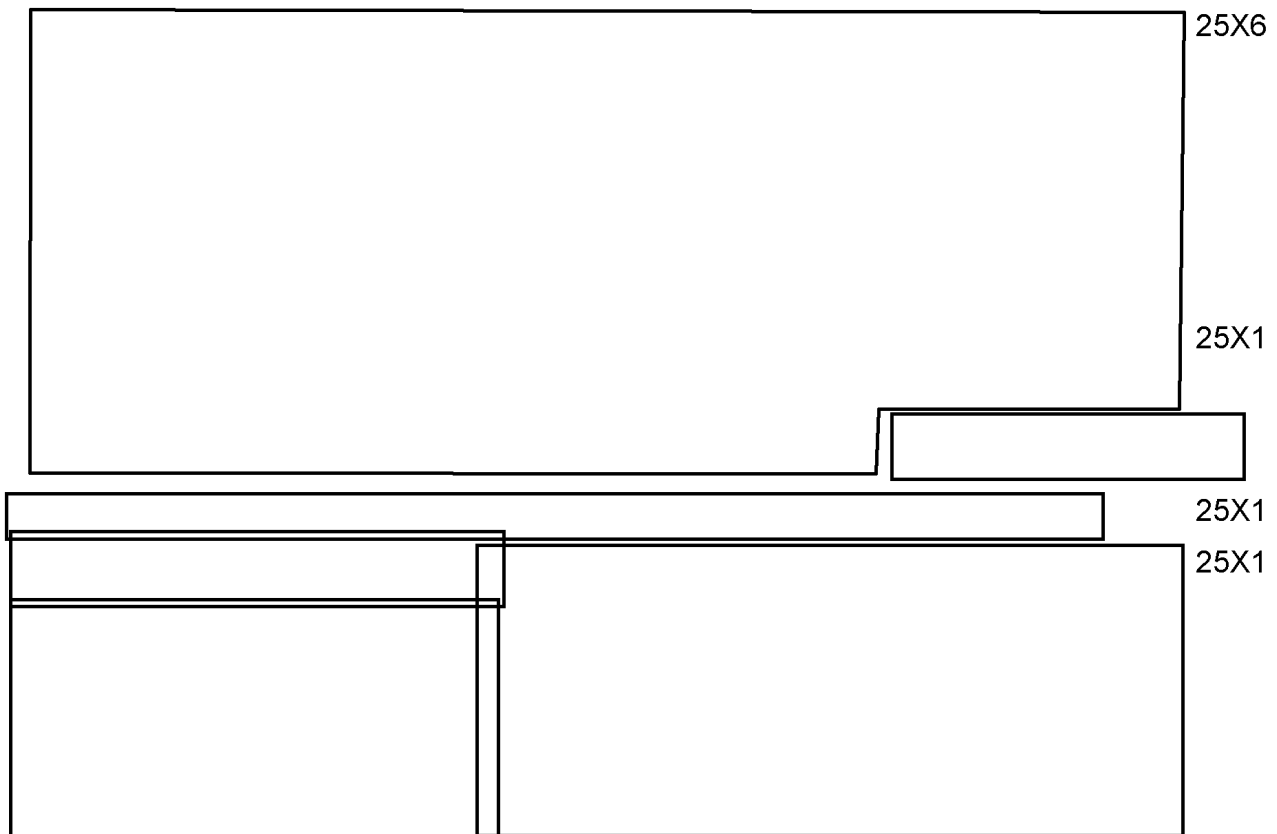
2/ The London-Zurich Accords provided for a Treaty of Guarantee signed by the Republic of Cyprus, the UK, Turkey, and Greece. The Treaty calls for consultation among Greece, Turkey, and Britain in case of infringement of any of the basic articles of the Constitution. If concerted action is not possible, each of the guarantors reserves the right to act alone to re-establish the state of affairs established by this treaty.

25X1

- 6 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T



8. The Soviet Union has seized the opportunity to fish in these troubled waters. Wholeheartedly supporting Makarios, the Soviets may encourage him to bypass the Guarantor Powers by taking the communal problem to the UN in hopes that many of the Afro-Asian nations would accept the Greek Cypriot argument. At the same time, the Communist Party of Cyprus (AKEL) is also following a similar line. It is well organized, well led, and commands the allegiance of a substantial proportion of the Greek community. Indeed, its ability to exploit present tensions to set off communal

- 7 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

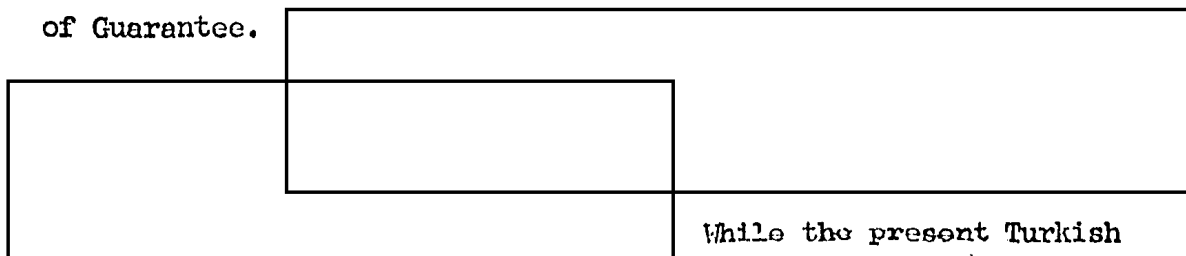
clashes is particularly dangerous in view of the doubtful control that the non-communist communal leaders can now exert on their followers.

Outlook

9. When Makarios does receive the Turkish replay, he may decide that further negotiations with them are useless. In this event there is a wide variety of moves he could make. He might attempt unilaterally to amend the Constitution or as a preliminary step denounce the Treaty of Guarantee. Also he might dissolve the House of Representatives, call a special Constitutional Assembly, call for early presidential or parliamentary elections (with a built-in referendum on the Constitutional amendment issue), and even take his case to the UN if need be. Almost any of these would probably provoke a bitter Turkish response, greatly enhancing the chances for open communal conflict and total disruption of Cypriot life. While it seems unlikely that such conflict would occur by calculation, once initiated, it would be difficult for the Greek and Turkish contingents to stand aside. In this case, both countries would be under heavy pressure to augment their forces with the consequent danger the conflict could spread. Despite these dangers, we believe that Makarios is likely to press forward as he

appears disinclined to accept a defeat to his prestige. Also, thanks to the encouragement he has received from Venizelos, he probably counts on ultimate Greek support.

10. Even if widespread violence does not occur, any attempt by Makarios to change unilaterally the Constitution would heat up the political situation. The Turkish community would almost certainly appeal to Turkey for protection according to the Treaty of Guarantee. 25X1



While the present Turkish civilian leadership has been somewhat more relaxed in its view of Cyprus, there would be strong compulsion from both the military and public opinion to accede to any request for assistance from the Turkish minority in Cyprus. Yet the Turkish government would feel itself torn by concern over its position in NATO and in the first instance would almost certainly put heavy pressure on the United States to intervene with the Greek government and with Makarios. The Turks would also probably seek to convene a meeting of the Guarantor Powers (the UK, Greece, and Turkey) to force Makarios to retreat. But if this international pressure were not successful, the Turkish government might encourage the

Cypriot Turks to attempt some sort of partition of the island and might as a last resort use its military forces to assist in this endeavor.

11. Any such moves would face the present precariously balanced Greek government with a series of difficult choices. Greek public opinion has never fully accepted former Premier Karamanlis' agreement to the provisions of the London-Zurich Accords, and thus the present government is strongly tempted to disavow the sober restraints of the earlier period. Yet despite the apparent willingness of the present Greek Foreign Minister to consider dispatching Greek troops if forces were sent from Turkey, it seems unlikely that any Greek government would accept the risk of hostilities with Turkey. Indeed, we believe that if an armed conflict between the communities on Cyprus broke out, the Greek government would probably prefer to work through the Guarantor Powers to decide on a solution. But once this stage were reached, the Greek leaders would encounter heavy domestic pressure to oppose accommodation with the Turks. In this situation it would take the strongest representations from the UK, backed by the United States, to impell the present Greek leaders to disavow Makarios and return to their policy of discouraging the Cypriots from unilateral action.

- 10 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

12. Without some effective international intervention including both Greece and Turkey, the bitterness between the Turkish and Greek communities on Cyprus will probably mount rapidly. As such joint intervention seems at present far off, time will thus work against arriving at any solution acceptable to both sides. Already the situation has deteriorated to the point where restoration of mutual confidence in any meaningful extent will be exceedingly difficult. Widespread communal violence, should it occur, might render return to peaceful coexistence within a single state impossible. In this event, some form of territorial partition or population exchange might become necessary, leaving scars that would trouble Greek-Turkish relations for a long time to come.